

FY15 GSRP Eligibility and Enrollment

Public Act 196 of 2014 (PA 196), signed by Governor Snyder on June 24, 2014, enacts several changes for GSRP eligibility. This document provides guidance to Intermediate School Districts (ISD) regarding these changes so each ISD can update policies, including prioritization of children for enrollment, as needed and provide training to subrecipients to ensure compliance.

GSRP Eligibility

PA 196 identifies categorical eligibility for GSRP for some children. Children in foster care, those experiencing homelessness, and children with an individualized education program (IEP) recommending placement in an inclusive preschool setting are automatically eligible for GSRP and should be considered within the lowest quintile (0 – 50% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)) for prioritization.

As always, the enrollment process shall consider income and risk factors, such that children determined with higher need are enrolled before children with lesser need. These changes do not revoke the requirement to refer all Head Start eligible children to Head Start following local written protocols, in compliance with the GSRP Implementation Manual.

When enrolling a child with an IEP consider the specific needs of the child and family and the composition of the class; although there is not a one size fits all situation and individual classroom needs and resources should be taken into consideration, best practice for inclusive classrooms limits the percentage of children with IEPs to no more than 25 percent.

Age Eligibility

Applications submitted under the following two age categories will be considered alongside all other applications when enrollment decisions are made. This includes referral to Head Start for any qualified child, regardless of age.

1. **GSRP Age Eligibility** – Parents of children who will turn 4 after the age cut off for GSRP but before December 1, may inform the grantee or subrecipient that they wish to apply for GSRP. The submission of a pre-application or application meets this requirement and there is no longer a deadline for parents to apply for GSRP.
2. **Kindergarten Age Eligibility** – The adjustment of the kindergarten age cut off means that children who attended GSRP may still be too young for kindergarten enrollment unless the parents requested early enrollment. In this case, those children **may apply** for a second year of GSRP.

Families between 250 – 300% FPL

There has been no change to the requirement that families above 250% FPL pay tuition based on an established sliding fee scale (unless the child qualifies under one of the categorical eligibility factors described above). Additionally, the requirement that no more than 10% of enrolled children are from families above 250% FPL remains in effect except under specific situations.

PA 196 states:

“If the intermediate district determines that all eligible children are being served and that there are no children on the waiting list under section 39(1)(D) who live with families with a household income that is equal to or less than 250% of the federal poverty level, the intermediate district may then enroll children who live with families with a household income that is equal to or less than 300% of the federal poverty level.”

Any ISD utilizing the option to serve more than 10% of children above 250% FPL or greater, must contact the assigned GSRP consultant at MDE and, if requested, be able to provide documentation of due diligence to identify and enroll all children at or below 250% FPL. At a minimum, ISDs must be able to demonstrate:

- Geographic location of GSRP classrooms compared to the population of GSRP eligible children and documentation of attempts to place classrooms in areas of high need;
- Recruitment efforts across the ISD and targeted to areas of high need;
- Enrollment of all identified eligible children below 250% FPL in GSRP or Head Start or documentation of reasons not enrolled; and
- Lack of eligible children at or below 250% FPL on waiting lists for both GSRP and Head Start.

In the event that an ISD is approved to serve children up to 300% FPL, all children enrolled with income up to 300% FPL are then considered to be income eligible. That ISD would then be able to fill up to 10% of its slots with children from families with incomes above 300% FPL.

Cross-ISD Enrollment

PA 196 provides for parent choice to enroll in a GSRP in a non-resident ISD. It states:

“An intermediate district or consortium of intermediate districts receiving a grant under this section shall allow parents of eligible children who are residents of the intermediate district or within the consortium to choose a program operated by or contracted with another intermediate district or consortium of intermediate districts and shall pay to the educating intermediate district or consortium the per-child amount attributable to each child enrolled pursuant to this sentence, as determined under Section 39.”

A parent wishing to enroll a child in a GSRP outside of the ISD of residence should apply to the selected GSRP, following the receiving ISD’s application procedure. An ISD receiving an application from a parent not residing in the ISD must have a policy for enrolling such children. Areas to consider when updating enrollment policies include:

- The availability of space for serving additional children;
- The prioritization of non-resident children;
- Communication between ISDs; and
- The process for the transfer of funds between ISDs.

Before enrolling a child from another ISD, an ISD must enter into a written agreement with the resident ISD. The written agreement must contain the components that form a binding agreement between two or more parties, including an offer, acceptance of that offer and

consideration of what each party gives of value that each would not normally be legally obligated to provide. The agreement must include:

- The number of children to be enrolled by the non-resident ISD;
- The program option to be utilized;
- The process for communication around children applying to be served outside of the resident ISD;
- Acknowledgement of the responsibilities of each ISD in accordance with GSRP requirements including payment of the per-slot amount for each child enrolled under the agreement; and
- A dispute resolution process.

OGS will collect information on the estimated number of slots for the cross-enrollment of children through the 2015 GSRP Implementation Plan (formerly the "Application"). A new MEGS+ report will be developed to collect the actual number of slots used for cross-enrollment in spring 2015. Actual funds associated with these slots will be accounted for in the Final Expenditure Report and monitored in case of fiscal audit.

Children served in a non-resident ISD will count as slots filled by the resident ISD. The slots associated with children enrolling in a non-resident ISD will remain with the resident ISD for the calculation of succeeding years' allocations. Therefore, the resident ISD must be responsible for all required reporting, including the reporting of the children in MSDS.